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ABSTRACT

The High School Public Law 89-313 Instructional Support Program was designed to enhance the education of handicapped high school students who were formerly enrolled in state-operated or state-supported settings prior to being transferred to a New York City public school. Eligible students are those with handicapping conditions who may be encountering difficulties adjusting to a high school's special education classroom environment as a result of having come from a highly structured setting. This report evaluates the 1989-90 program. Findings suggest that the program was successful in meeting and surpassing all but one of its stated evaluation objectives. The program generally received positive ratings from teachers, teacher trainers, and site coordinators. Analysis of a sample of students reflected that the program did not meet the first student outcome objective or its alternative (that 80 percent of students would show a 10 percent improvement in Regents Competency Test (RCT) raw scores, or would pass the examination); however, the program not only met but surpassed the second student outcome objective and its alternative (that 20 percent would show a 15 percent improvement in RCT raw scores, or would pass the examination). The report presents four recommendations and includes statistical data in two tables. (AF)

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OREA Report

HIGH SCHOOL
E.C.I.A. CHAPTER 1
P.L. 89-313 PROGRAM
1989-90

STATE REPORT

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HIGH SCHOOL
E.C.I.A. CHAPTER 1
P.L. 89-313 PROGRAM
1989-90

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This report was prepared by the Special Education Evaluation Unit, Ronald C. Miller, Unit Manager, of the Office of Research, Evaluation , and Assessment (OREA) of the New York City Public Schools. Marcia Torres, Evaluation Specialist, was the study manager, and William Askins was the Senior Consultant. Consultants William Tierney and Jillian Shagan compiled the quantitative data.

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HIGH SCHOOL
E.C.I.A. CHAPTER 1
P.L. 89-313 PROGRAM
1989-90

SUMMARY

The High School Public Law 89-313 Instructional Support Program was designed to enhance the education of handicapped high school students who were formerly enrolled in state-operated or state-supported settings prior to being transferred to a New York City pubic school. The program provided materials and equipment and staff development. Data which program staff provided OREA consisted of 319 student data entries, 52 teacher surveys, four teacher trainer surveys, and 39 site coordinator surveys.

OREA's evaluation findings suggested that the program was implemented as planned. Respondents viewed the services provided by teacher trainers positively. The primary strengths of the program were the individualized approach to instruction, the expertise of the teacher trainers, and the quality and availability of materials. Teachers positively rated the program but felt that more time was needed for planning and instruction, more parental involvement was needed, and the identification of students needed to be improved.

OREA outcome data showed that between 79 and 86 percent of respondents perceived H.S. P.L. 89-313 staff development positively in each of five training categories, thus virtually meeting the program outcome objective of 80 percent.

Analysis was conducted on a small sample of students who had received instruction in targeted H.S. P.L. 89-313 subject areas and had either both 1989 and 1990 R.C.T. scores or just 1990 scores available. This showed that the program did not meet the first student outcome objective or its alternative (that 80 percent of students would show a 10 percent improvement in R.C.T. raw scores, or would pass the examination). The results were 50 percent and 19 percent, respectively. However, the program not only met but surpassed the second student outcome objective and its alternative (that 20 percent would show a 15 percent improvement in R.C.T. raw scores, or would pass the examination). The results were 39 percent and 19 percent, respectively. The findings reflected that the program met one of the two student outcome objectives; however, because the available data were so limited, these findings were not generalizable, nor could they be considered conclusive. The limited data also suggested that the criteria used to measure the progress of the H.S. P.L. 89-313 student population must be modified to suit a larger percentage of this particular group.

Based on the findings of the evaluation, the following specific recommendations are made.

- The process of identifying students needs to be improved.
- More time should be set aside for program planning and instruction.
- There should be at least one trainer for each H.S. district, thus avoiding making one individual responsible for more than one district and giving that person enough time to provide sufficient training to teachers.

- Teachers or site coordinators should be encouraged to contact parents of program participants on a regular basis and arrange to meet with them at least once during the program year.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		PAGE
I.	INTRODUCTION	1
II.	EVALUATION METHODOLOGY	4
III.	EVALUATION FINDINGS	6
IV.	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	15

LIST OF TABLES

		PAGE
Table 1:	Distribution of Schools and Students by High School Districts	7
Table 2:	Quality of Training as Reported by Teachers	14

I. INTRODUCTION

The High School Public Law 89-313 Instructional Support program (H.S. P.L. 89-313) is federally funded and designed to supplement local and state efforts to provide education to eligible students with handicapping conditions. The program specifically targets students under the age of 21 who have been enrolled in state-operated or state-supported settings for at least one year prior to being transferred to a New York City public school. Eligible students are those with handicapping conditions who may be encountering difficulties adjusting to a high school's special education classroom environment as a result of having come from a highly structured setting. H.S. P.L. 89 - 313 is designed to provide such students with a broad range of activities through the provision of supplementary instructional support. It provides each eligible student with individually-tailored instructional activities and/or materials based on the evaluation of their specific needs. During the 1989-90 school year, the H.S. P.L. 89-313 program received $250,743 in reimbursable funds.

The responsibilities and activities of program personnel augment those of other staff members being paid from other reimbursable and local operating funds. More specifically, the program design states that under the coordination of a representative from the Special Education Operations Unit of the Division of High Schools and in consultation with site supervisors, each H.S. P.L. 89-313 teacher trainer is to train and otherwise assist teachers to more effectively use instructional materials and techniques to help students accomplish their individual educational goals and pass their Regents Competency Tests (R.C.T.s). Most of the teacher trainers' time is to be spent visiting high schools and working directly with the teachers of program students. Although it is the responsibility of the teacher trainers to schedule regular visits to high schools, the frequency of these visits depends

on the number of eligible students at each school, and the individual needs of each student; however, trainers are scheduled to see teachers at least once a month. Where feasible, trainers are also to conduct borough-wide training meetings with teachers, focusing on areas indicated by a needs assessment.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Program planners specified that the following objectives would be met by June 30, 1990.

- Eighty percent of these students would show a 10 percent improvement in R.C.T. raw scores, or would pass the examination.
- Twenty percent would show a 15 percent improvement in raw scores, or would pass the examination.
- Eighty percent of the program teachers would respond favorably to training activities that present concepts, methods, and materials in the areas of reading, math, writing, social studies, or science, as a result of participation in individual on-site training, and where feasible, workshops given by H.S. P.L. 89-313 teacher trainers in individual and group sessions.

The selection of the subject area in which teachers were to be trained would be individually determined by a review of the student's subject grades to identify the area requiring the greatest need for improvement. The major thrust of the program this year, as defined in the program design, was to help teachers prepare students to pass their reading, math and writing R.C.T. examinations. Teachers whose students had passed the R.C.T.s were provided training in the instruction of students in general science, American history, or global studies--other areas in which R.C.T.s are administered.

SCOPE OF THIS REPORT

This report is organized into four chapters. Chapter I presents program background and objectives, Chapter II presents the evaluation methodology, Chapter III

presents a discussion of the evaluation findings, and Chapter IV contains conclusions and recommendations for future program modifications.

II. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Program Implementation

- What were student eligibility requirements and characteristics?
- What did program staffing consist of?
- What did teacher training consist of, how frequently was it scheduled, and what topics were covered?

Program Outcomes

- By June 30, 1990, 80 percent of eligible students whose teachers receive intensive staff development will show a 10 percent improvement in R.C.T. raw scores or will pass the examination; 20 percent will show a 15 percent improvement in raw scores or will pass the examination.
- By June 30, 1990, 80 percent of the program teachers will respond favorably to training activities that present concepts, methods, and materials in the areas of reading, math, writing, social studies, or science as a result of participation in individual on-site training, and where feasible, workshops given by H.S. P.L. 89-313 teacher trainers in individual and group sessions.

EVALUATION PROCEDURE

Sample

The sample consisted of all students identified as H.S. P.L. 89-313 participants, all teachers who worked with these participants, all site coordinators, and all teacher trainers.

Instruments

The evaluation design utilized several methodologies to examine program objectives. To gather qualitative data on the program, OREA distributed surveys to each teacher, teacher trainer, and site coordinator. The survey instrument for site coordinators focused on program implementation, selection of eligible students, teacher training, and

the program's strengths and weaknesses. Teacher trainer questionnaires focused on the number of teachers and students served, program implementation, and recommendations for program modifications. Teacher surveys dealt with the assistance that teachers received from the teacher trainers, program strengths and weaknesses, and recommendations they had for next year's program. All surveys contained both open and closed-ended questions.

Data Collection

In May 1990, OREA distributed student data retrieval forms and teacher trainer, site coordinator, and teacher surveys through the program coordinator. All data was returned to OREA by the end of the school year. OREA received 309 student data entries, 52 teacher surveys, four teacher trainer surveys, and 39 site coordinator surveys.

Data Analysis

OREA staff conducted a comparative analysis of survey responses that addressed program implementation questions. It also calculated the percentage of students who improved their level of achievement. As the pretest, OREA used the reading R.C.T., the mathematics Metropolitan Achievement Test (M.A.T.) for entering students, or the most recent R.C.T. score. Otherwise, the January 1990 R.C.T. served as a pretest. The June 1990 R.C.T. was used as a posttest measure.

III. EVALUATION FINDINGS

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Student Eligibility Requirements

Data retrieval forms indicated that 309 students participated in the program. The process of identifying eligible students was complicated by the delay between the time students left the private institutions and the time their names appeared on the state roster. This delay, as well as inaccuracies in state records, resulted in the inclusion of names of students who had never registered and the omission of names of students who had left state-supported programs and were eligible for funding. In addition, some students who had been eligible for the program had graduated, been discharged, or completed the program.

Characteristics of Participating Students

Most of the students who participated in the program were between 15 and 19 years of age. The vast majority were in either MIS I or MIS II classes (a few were in SIS) at 95 high school sites in all six high school districts (see Table 1). According to 44 percent of the 39 site coordinators who responded to OREA's survey, students were selected mainly on the basis of a H.S. P.L. 89-313 printout or by means of a record search; 51 percent reported that the process had included a review of students' Individualized Education Programs (I.E.P.s).

Program Staffing

Project Director. The Division of High Schools' Office of Special Education Operations Unit was responsible for the administration of the program. A representative

Table 1

Distribution of Schools and Students
by High School Districts

High School Districts	Number of Schools	Number of Students	Percent of Students
A	16	45	14.0
B	17	63	19.7
C	16	38	12.2
D	13	36	11.3
E	24	120	37.6
F	9	17	5.2
Totals	95	319	100.0

Source: Student Data Retrieval Forms

- *The H.S. P.L. 89-313 program served 319 students in 95 high schools in all six* high school districts.

from that unit functioned as project director and met on a monthly basis with teacher trainers to direct their activities. Topics discussed at these meetings included: posting for per-session positions, updating budget modifications, updating student eligibility and identification procedures, teaching study skills, and identifying and solving problems in the process of purchasing materials. The project director also reviewed the latest educational research literature and kept teacher trainers appraised of new developments. In addition to the general coordination of the project, the director was also responsible for the allotment of per-session time and the production, distribution, and training of trainers in the use of program forms and manuals.

Site Coordinators. Assistant principals for Special Education at each participating school functioned as site coordinators and were involved in the planning and implementation of the program in a variety of ways. Their duties included helping to identify eligible students, discussing individual student needs with teacher trainers and teachers, and acting as liaisons between teacher trainers and school staff. Of the 39 site coordinators who responded to OREA's survey, 38 percent reported that they had monitored the program on a daily basis; 33 percent indicated that they had planned or participated in staff meetings; 33 percent reported that they had played a role in the program's planning at their school; 23 percent reported that they had spent time selecting or disseminating materials; and 15 percent said that they reviewed the I.E.P. mandates. Only 13 percent of respondents reported that their involvement in the program's planning and implementation had been minimal.

Most coordinators had regular contact with the program's teacher trainers: 19 percent of the respondents reported that they had met with them more than once a month, 60 percent reported that they had contact with them about once a month; and 21

percent reported meeting with them less than once a month. Respondents reported discussing a variety of topics at these meetings: 23 percent reported discussing instructional materials; 18 percent reported speaking about program scheduling; 10 percent reported discussing student performance and I.E.P.s; and eight percent reported discussing planning training and teacher performance. Out of 38 coordinators who responded to the item, 76 percent reported that the quality of their contact with teacher trainers had been excellent, while another 16 percent indicated that it was good. Only one coordinator felt that it was fair, and one other considered that it had been poor.

Teacher Trainers. H.S. P.L. 89-313 partially funded five teacher trainers who were responsible for providing program services and conducting training sessions for the teachers of program students. These teacher trainers, under the direction of the project director from the Special Education Operations Unit of the High School Division provided training and assistance for program-funded supplementary teachers of eligible students at 95 high schools with one or more program students in all six high school districts. (Two districts shared the services of one teacher trainer.) Each of the trainers was assigned to a high school district's executive assistant superintendent for special education. The assistant superintendent worked together with staff from the Division of High School (D.H.S.) and was responsible for the day-to-day supervision of the program and the achievement of the program's objectives. Teacher trainers spent half of their time visiting high schools and working directly with program students' teachers by conducting individual training sessions geared to each teacher's program needs. Teacher trainers reported that the other half of their time was spent doing paperwork and other administrative activities.

Although this had not been part of the original proposal, one teacher trainer

conducted boroughwide workshops in addition to individual teacher training sessions in her high school district. Workshop topics included planning lessons, questioning techniques, the selection of materials, and the R.C.T.s. Trainers from the other five high school districts reported that teachers were not receptive to boroughwide workshops because they were unavailable after school hours.

Teachers. Teaching positions were advertised on a school-by-school basis. The assistant principal for special education at each school was responsible for making the final staff selection. Of the 52 teachers who responded to OREA's survey, 56 percent reported that they had instructed program students in math, 44 percent in reading, 40 percent in writing, 13 percent in social studies, and 12 percent in science.

Teacher Training

Five teacher trainers conducted staff development sessions for the teachers of program students at 95 high school sites. They worked directly with teachers to train and assist them to more effectively use instructional materials and equipment provided by the program. Teacher trainers conducted three types of training activities: individual consultations, group workshops held at school sites, and boroughwide workshops. Of the 52 teachers who responded to OREA's survey, 69 percent reported that they had received individual training sessions; 31 percent reported participating in group workshops at their schools; and 16 percent indicated that they had taken part in boroughwide workshops.

Eighty-eight percent of the teachers responding to the survey reported that they had received instruction in teaching strategies and materials; 39 percent indicated that they had received training in testing methods; and 12 percent reported receiving training in student referral. Fifty-seven percent of them reported meeting monthly with their

teacher trainers, 17 percent reported meeting with them on a more frequent basis, and 26 percent reported meeting less frequently.

Program Feedback

Program Strengths. Participants' perceptions of the quality of general program services were positive. Of the 52 teachers and 39 site coordinators who responded to OREA's survey, 16 percent of teachers and 28 percent of the site coordinators commented favorably about the quality and availability of instructional materials; 31 percent of coordinators praised the individualized approach to instruction that characterized the program; and 38 percent of this group lauded the expertise and services provided by the teacher trainers.

Program Weaknesses. Site supervisors suggested a number of ways in which the program could be improved: 41 percent said that more time was needed for planning and instruction; 20 percent believed that the program would be enhanced by greater parental involvement; and 15 percent reported encountering difficulty in identifying eligible students to participate in the program.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

The following section is a presentation of OREA's findings on the two program outcome criteria. The first addressed student achievement, and the second addressed program quality as perceived by program staff. They were:

- By June 30, 1990, 80 percent of eligible students whose teachers had received intensive staff development would show a 10 percent improvement in R.C.T. raw scores or would pass the examination; 20 percent would show a 15 percent improvement in R.C.T. raw scores or would pass the examination.
- By June 30, 1990, 80 percent of the program teachers would respond favorably to training activities that presented concepts, methods, and materials in the areas of reading, math, writing, social studies, or science as a result of

participating in individual on-site training, and where feasible, workshops given by H.S. P.L. 89-313 teacher trainers in individual and group sessions.

Student Achievement

Relevant data was unavailable for much of the student population, (e.g., of the 309 students who were identified as H.S. P.L. 89-313 participants, attendance data was not available for 66 percent (203), data on student promotion was missing for 89 percent (275), and targeted H.S. P.L. 89-313 content areas were identified for only about 41 percent (128).) Of the latter group, 1990 R.C.T. raw scores were available for only 28 percent (36) and R.C.T. scores for both 1989 and 1990 were available for only 14 percent (18).

Of the 18 students for whom R.C.T. scores for both 1989 and 1990 were available and whose targeted subject areas were reported, 72 percent (13) demonstrated some improvement in their raw scores, 50 percent (9) showed positive changes in their raw scores of ten percent or more, and 39 percent (7) improved their scores 15 percent or more.

Of the 36 students for whom H.S. P.L. 89-313 targeted specific content areas and had 1990 R.C.T. scores, 19 percent (7) passed the examinations.

Analysis of this very limited sample of students (those with identified targeted H.S. P.L. 89-313 subject areas and with both 1989 and 1990 scores or with 1990 R.C.T. scores) reflected that the program did not meet the basic criteria for the first student outcome, nor did it meet the alternative (that 80 percent of students would show a 10 percent improvement in R.C.T. raw scores or would pass the examination). Only 50 percent met the basic criteria and only 19 percent met the alternative.

The program met the basic criteria as well as the alternative for the second student

outcome objective (20 percent would show a 15 percent improvement in R.C.T. raw scores or would pass the examination). The results were 39 percent and 19 percent, respectively.

Thus, the findings reflected that the program met one of the two student outcome objectives. However, because the available data was so limited, these findings were not generalizable, nor could they be considered conclusive. The limited data also suggested that the criteria used to measure the progress of the H.S. P.L. 89-313 student population must be modified to suit a larger percentage of this particular group.

Program Quality

At the end of the year, teachers were asked to assess the quality of training that the program's teacher trainers had provided them. As Table 2 shows, a majority of the teachers who responded viewed the training positively. OREA outcome data showed that between 79 and 86 percent of respondents perceived H.S. P.L. 89-313 staff development positively in each of five training categories, thus virtually meeting the program outcome objective of 80 percent. About 86 percent stated that materials provided in the training sessions were appropriate for their students.

Table 2

Quality of Training as Reported by Teachers

(N = 52)

Training Categories	Participants Who Viewed Training Positively	
	Number	Percent
Training was helpful in working with H.S. P.L. 89-313 students	41	79
Training was well adapted to my educational needs	42	80
The presentations were well organized	43	82
Concepts and methods were defined and clarified	43	82
Materials provided were appropriate to the educational needs of my students	45	86

Source: OREA's Teacher Survey

- *Between 79 and 86 percent of teachers perceived H.S. P.L. 89-313 staff development positively in each of the five training categories.*
- *About 86 percent of teachers reported that materials provided in the training sessions were appropriate for students.*

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

OREA's evaluation findings suggested that the 1989-90 program was successful in meeting and surpassing all but one of its stated evaluation objectives. Services provided by the teacher trainers were viewed positively by the teachers. Both teachers and site coordinators regarded the primary strengths of the program as being the individualized approach to instruction, the expertise of the teacher trainers, and the quality and availability of materials. Though not entirely without problems, the program generally received positive ratings from teachers, teacher trainers, and site coordinators.

The main weaknesses of the program were: that more time was needed for planning and instruction, more parental involvement was needed, and the identification of students needed to be improved.

OREA outcome data showed that between 79 and 86 percent of respondents perceived H.S. P.L. 89-313 staff development positively in each of five training categories, thus virtually meeting the program outcome objective of 80 percent.

Analysis of a very small sample of students (those who had identified targeted H.S. P.L. 89-313 subject areas and for whom both 1989 and 1990 R.C.T. scores or 1990 R.C.T. scores were available) reflected that the program did not meet the first student outcome objective or its alternative (that 80 percent of students would show a 10 percent improvement in R.C.T. raw scores or would pass the examination). These results were 50 and 19 percent, respectively. However, the program not only met, but surpassed the second student outcome objective and its alternative (that 20 percent would show a 15 percent improvement in R.C.T. raw scores, or would pass the examination). These results were 39 and 19 percent, respectively. The findings reflected that the program met one

of the two student outcome objectives; however because the available data was so limited, these findings were not generalizable nor could they be considered conclusive. The limited data also suggested that the criteria used to measure the progress of the H.S. P.L. 89-313 student population must be modified to suit a larger percentage of this particular group.

Based on the findings of the evaluation, the following specific recommendations are made.

- The process of identifying students needs to be improved.
- More time should be set aside for program planning and instruction.
- There should be at least one trainer for each H.S. district, thus avoiding making one individual responsible for more than one district and giving that person enough time to provide sufficient training to teachers.
- Teachers or site coordinators should be encouraged to contact parents of program participants on a regular basis and arrange to meet with them at least once during the program year.